

DRYING MY TURNINGS – by Richard R. Ruehle

I, like many turners have used numerous techniques to dry my turnings. I have coated, roughed out pieces with sealer and let them dry for a year or more and some still were not under 12-15% moisture content. I have used penecryl and felt it was ok but it was expensive and still took a lot of time. I have used the boiling technique but again it took a long time to dry.

A couple of years ago my brother came across an old 4-door restaurant refrigerator which he said I could have. I accepted and took out the shelves and put in new supports so I could have better shelf utilization. The unit has a fan system in the top and I have it running all the time. The heat is supplied by a 100-watt light bulb that I keep on all the time. The temperature is between 90 and 100 degrees in the summer and 85 degrees in the colder months. Using this unit, I dry my turning down to 6-8

degrees moisture content in three weeks or so. I try to empty the unit and fill it completely at one time. When filling the unit, I put in large and small and everything in between. I generally put 75 to 150 pieces in at once and after 2-3 weeks, if I have something I want to finish, I check the moisture content and if acceptable I finish it.

I coat my turning inside and out with sealer and generally let them lay around for a month or so before putting in the kiln. I believe by coating this it slows down the drying process and keeps them from cracking.

Richard R Ruehle